NEW LIGHT ON THE HOLY BIBLE

MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

PART I

BY

Mr. M. S. RAMASWAMI AIYAR, B. A., M. R. A. S.
Deputy Superintendent of Police.

PRINTED AT SRI VYASA PRESS,
TIRUPATI.
1928.

NEW LIGHT ON THE HOLY BIBLE.

SAMUEL'S TARPANAM

BY

Mr. M. S. RAMASWAMI AIYAR, B. A., M. R. A. S.

Deputy Superintendent of Police.

Since India according to my discoveries was the background of Palestine and Jesus Christ a Tamilian, the books of the Old Testament are as near and dear to us as the Ramayana, the Mahabaratha and the Puranas and the New Testament of Kesava Krishna as important to us as the Bagavat Gita of Gopala Krishna, for if Gopala Krishna taught us from the Chariot on the field of Kurukshetra in India, that in the performance of duty man should do it without caring for its fruits, Kesava Krishna taught us from the Cross on the Golgotha (கொலகட்டம், place of killing or execution) in Palestine that even in the performance of that duty Ahimsa, non-violence, should ever be his motto and at all costs too. Indians therefore should take up the study of that colonial Puranam the Holy Bible in right earnest hereafter. For if that book is

understood properly, if that book is to be interpreted properly, it could be done not by the scholars and theologians of the West, but only by the Pandits and Pandarams of India. At the end of an article on Jesus Christ published in THE HINDU for 20th June 1925, I said that neither the general nor even the learned Indian public has yet realised the importance of my discoveries and the flood of unexpected new light they throw upon problems that are riddles to scholars of East and West. With the object of rousing up my countrymen from their lethargy, with the object of pointing out to them, what virgin fields lie fallow owing to their inactivity, I propose to mention some of these perplexing problems from time to time, in a series of articles under the above caption and show what light my discoveries shed on them.

I Samuel VII. 5 and 6 run as follows:— (Ver. 5) "And Samuel said Gather all Israel to Mizpeh and I will pray for you unto the Lord." (Ver. 6) "And they gathered together to Mizpeh and drew water and poured it out before the Lord and fasted on that day and said there, we have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged tho children of Israel at Mizpeh."

Under instructions from Samuel all Israel (Isvaral ஈஸ்வரன்) gathered together at Mizpeh so that they might repent of their sins there. The-

pouring out of water (during the course of repentance) mentioned in verse 6 is a perplexing act to Biblical commentators. If they had understood what the term Shophetim and the name Samuel really mean, the act would not be a puzzle to them. I shall explain what the act is, in this paper. Let me quote first the opinion of theologians on the act of the verse to enable the reader to realise how much they have understood the Bible which they are preaching to the world. Rev. Dummelow's "One Volume Commentary on the Bible" (p. 186) says that "The symbolism of the act is uncertain. The most probable explanation is that of the Tarjams, that it represented the pouring out of their hearts in repentance before the Lord." Rev. R. Tuck in his "A Hand book of Biblical Difficulties or Reasonable Solutions of Perplexing Things in Sacred Scripture" remarks as follows in page 279: "As the pouring of water is not a Mosaic rite this must be regarded as an unauthorised and superstitious ceremony. The act has greatly puzzled Bible students and many suggestions in connection with it have been made. The one that commends itself is that the pouring of water was a symbolical act very well understood by Eastern people. Writing on the customs of India, Mr. Roberts tells us that pouring water on the ground is a very ancient way of confirming an oath in India." And in support of this Rev. Tuck quotes

from Mr. Roberts stories as to how Bali Chakravarthi and Parvati's father poured water, when the former granted his kingdom to Vamana and when the latter gave his daughter in marriage to God Siva. However much India might be maligned a heathen country, yet it is to this heathen land that staunch Christians too have to look for explanations of even Biblical difficulties and I am glad that Rev. Tuck turned thither. The direction is right but the thing pitched upon is wrong. Pouring water in giving a Danam or in bestowing a daughter in marriage is called தாரைவார்க்குகிறது. But the act referred to in the Bible is not that. Any Indian will be able to say what it is--Tarpanam which is still performed in India. If theologians would visit the Triplicane or San Thome Beach at Madras on an eclipse day or on a Malaya Ammavasai morning and observe what people do there, then they will have a very good idea of what all Israel did on that memorable day at Mizpeh three thousand years ago.

The Bible does not say that Samuel too poured out water: in fact he should not. The act was done by others under his superintendence or in his presence. As the performance was done under his orders I call the article Samuel's Tarpanam. Well. Samuel's Tarpanam may sound a little queer in modern ears—as queer as Sankarachari Swamigal's appearance with a top hat and in boots. But the

queerness will vanish when the reader realises that the title judges applied to Samuel and the others that preceded him in that office is a wrong translation of the Hebrew word Shophetim, that the term Samuel is not a personal name (as commentators think) but a general designation and that Shophetim and Samuel are Western corruptions of Indian words. How Shophet Samuel is a corruption of Sappathi Samuel (சப்பதி சாமியள் i. e., சகபதி ஸ்வாமிகள்) I shall narrate on some other occasion.

II

JESUS OF DARK COMPLEXION.

In the articles that I have been publishing in the Madras Press, I had shown that Aramaic the mother tongue of Jesus Christ was the same as Aram—Aravam—Tamil. Did Jesus then belong to a Tamil family and was he a dark man too like us Tamilians of Southern India?

To get an idea of a child, look at its parents. The mother tongue of Jesus was found to be Tamil. A man's mother tongue is his mother's tongue. To what nationality, did Mary, the mother of Jesus belong? A Tamil lady of course. In old Byzantine pictures she is painted as of dark or olivegreen colour and devout writers had argued from this fact that the Virgin should have been of dark complexion (1), and such a representation of Byzantine art exists to-day in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Florence (2). The Tamils are a dark people. When the mother tongue of Jesus is the same as Tamil, is there not ethnic reason for his mother being represented (as in Byzantine art) as of dark complexion? Her name Mary and its variant Mariam (3) therefore are மாரி and மாரியம்மா. Since she was a Tamilian one would expect her to be

represented in an Indian fashion. In a Mosaic of the 5th-6th century in the Chancel of the Basilica, Parenzo (4) she is portrayed with a forehead mark like the Marvadis of Madras and others put on: in a Mosaic of the 6th century in the Oratory of Sanvincenzo near the Lateren Baptistery in Rome (5) in a sari tied in Hindu fashion with the Dhavani with three border-stripes hanging behind her and with Vibhuthi marks on her forehead and neck: in a Bass relief of the 12th century in Parma done by the Italian sculptor Benedetto Antelami (6) in a Sari tied in Hindu fashion again with a கைக்காப்பு and with a neck ornament resembling a Gajja Addiga (in the opinion of my wife): in a Mosaic of the same century (12th) in the Archiepiscopal Palace at Revenna (7) with a Namam together with a Bottu mark in it on her forehead. Does not Mary's salutation of her divine infant with a கும்பிடும்கை seen in the pictures done by Andrea Della Robbia (8), Donatello (9) and others remind us of Devaki's worship of Santhana Krishna. In Carlo Crevelli's picture in the Podesti Gallery in Ancona, Mary wears a garland of beads round the crown of her head (10) like the Rudraksham donned by Pandaram men and women of India. In the light of this picture does not that puzzling name that Jesus had Ben Pandara (11) become luminously clear? Ben Pandara, it appears, means son of Pandera. Is it not son of

பண்டாரம் (Pandaram)? While Hindu men sit with both legs crossed, Hindu women on the other hand sit with the right leg bent and parallel to the earth and the left leg bent and at right angles to the earth. Any South Indian can understand what I mean by this description. Amongst the people of Southern India somehow this mode is considered to be the proper style of sitting on marriage occasions and in decent society. Was it not because Mariam was a Tamil மாரியம்மா, that in Taddeo Gaddi's representation of Anunciation in Santa Croce in Florence (12) she is portrayed as sitting inside a மகரம் in the mode described above awaiting her marriage with God and that in Beatto Angelico's picture of Crucifixion in Florence (13) she is portrayed as sitting in the same posture again in open air gazing mutely as the Mother of Sorrows alone could, at the noble way in which her beloved son bore the agony of the Cross. Blessed is she who gave her son to the cause of the world. No wonder Mary has been deified as a Goddess along with her inimitable son by grateful humanity.

Saivite and Vaishnavite Representations of Jesus in Christian Symbolism.

Jesus Christ and his mother after their deification were represented both in a Saivite and in a Vaishnavite manner by the Apostles and the follow-

ers of the Apostles in the early days of Christianity and which Saivite and Vaishnavite manner has come down to our own times. It would take an article as long as the present one to deal with this question adequately. I shall revert to the subject at some other time. In the meanwhile I shall mention a few examples to whet the curiosity of the reader. Jesus has the following representations in Christian symbolism. The moment one looks at them from India, they will arrange themselves as below. (Jesus as Siva) Bull. Peacock, Cock,— (as Vishnu) Fish, Eagle (Garuda), Man, Lion, Chakram (misthought as Hand nimbus , Sankam (misthought as Snail), Nabikamalam (misthought as a ray of starlight falling on the trunk of Jesus's body),Lotus (misthought as Rose), sleeping posture, Dwarf (Vamana Avataram)—(as Krishna) Peacock feather, cow and ass, Treading the Serpent, Transfiguration (Viswarupam)—(as Trimurti) three heads on one shoulder. Turning to Mary, take the idea of her Immaculate conception. It is an ancient Indian one. Karna, one of the heroes of the Mahabharatha is said to have been born to Kunthi, when she was a virgin by the Sun-God Surya. Take the conception of the marriage of Mary with God and compare it with the famous Vaishnava Saintess Andal's dream of her marriage with God. Take again the fact of Mary being looked upon in the Roman Catholic Church

as "Intercessor." That too is a Hindu idea. For among the Vaishnavites as F. N. Bhattachari says in his "Hindu Castes and Sects" (p. 436) Lakshmi is worshipped as "Mediator." So the worship of Mary is her worship as Lakshmi, Goddess of Fortune. It is but natural therefore in the fitness of things that Mary after deification should be given Plaintain and Ape as symbols (4) the true signifi, cance of which has not been understood by Europeans. The Plantain is the Kadalipalam for Nivedyam and the Ape appearing in the Ferrarese-pictures to the repugnance of Europeans (15) is Hanuman, the Monkey god of India for service, Sevey (சேவை). In a lecture delivered at Madras recently under the auspices of the Madras Teachers' Guild I showed that Jesus was what is called in our country now a Visvakarma Brahmana. The Visvakarma Brahmanas as Kammalars call themselves, appear to have held a high place in the ancient religious life of India and they add the honorific title of Teacher, Achar and Bhatta to their names. The Apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew calls Mary's grandfather Achar (16). In the light of this fact, the marriage of Mary to a carpenter becomes significant. A caste marriage to use a modern expression.

Who was Joseph the husband of Mary? The piece of information passed on to us by Aristotle

regarding the Indian origin of the Jews gave us the formula Habiru-Abira-Araba-Arava. Since Joseph was a Jew, he was a Tamil according to this formula His name therefore must be an Indian one. What is it? Now all information regarding ancient Palestine has come down to us through Western sources. So we have to pierce through the mists of Western corruption to find out what Indian word Joseph is. Now O and E are interchangeable latters e. g. Joshua-Jeshua: சொம்ப-செம்ப பொட்டி-பெட்டி. Joseph hence is Soshep-Seshep-Sesheppa. To those that may be sceptical of my identification, I would say, refer to I. Chronicles. II 31, 34, 35, and see whether the Indian form Sheshan occurs or not in the Bible. Since Abba occurs frequently in names in Palestine (e. g., Barabba, Barabban), Sesha + Appa is not at all an unlikely combination. At our weddings we don a yellow cloth. Since Joseph was a Tamil Seshappa, the rules of Christian Sacred Art require him to be represented in his wedding pictures with a yellow pallium (17) பஞ்ச வேஷ்டி as we say.

Jesus had a sister who bore the beautiful name of Thamar (18). Thamar is not Palmyra as Westerners think but lotus, Tamarai, (தாமரை) and that name is the Tamil form of the Sanskrit Pankajam.

Since Jesus belonged to a Tamil family, as will be apparent from the facts of his mother tongue and

the names of his relations being Tamil, he is represented as wearing his hair knot at the back of his head in south Indian fashion in a picture reproduced in Sir Wyke Bayliss's Rex Regnm from old Roman catacombs. It is for the same reason again that the painters of the German School (19) as well as Luini (20) Bellini (21) Velasques (22) and others portray Jesus at the column and on the Cross with his loin-cloth tied as a South Indian Kacham. The best specimen of this way of Jesus wearing the cloth is to be seen in Andrea del Costagno's picture of Crucifixion in the Convento delgi Angeli in Florence (23) and in the procession figure of Jesus existing in the Church of the Little Mount near Madras. Since Jesus was a Visvakarma Brahmana, he put on Phylacteries (i.e. sacred thread) when he went to the temple at the age of 12 for the performance of his Sabbath of Phylacteries (i.e. his Upanayanam), when he became Son of the Precepts or Son of the Law (i.e. Brahmachari). So he is shown in the picture of the Good Shepherd in the Ufizi Gallery in Florence (24) painted by some unknown painter of the Perugino School and in the Ampullae in the Cathedral at Monza (25) with the Indian sacred thread. And later on, if the Babylonian Gemara may be relied, he became a great Sidta (26), Sidda, சித்தர். In Adam's handbook of Criminal Investigation (p. 846) pictures of the various forehead marks

in use in India are given. And because Jesus was an Indian devotee of God that in the ivory cover of a Venetian Book of the Gospels of the eleventh century (27) and in Mosaic of about 1300 A. D. existing in the Cathedral Chancel at Pisa (28) he wears forehead marks like forehead mark No. 12 or No. 13 and forehead mark No. 9 respectively of Adam's Handbook mentioned above.

If Mary was of dark complexion how was her son Jesus; was he a dark man too like her and like us people of Southern India? Traditional literary descriptions of him have come down to us through John of Damascus and Niciphorus Callisti. Both these writers state that Jesus was of wheat colour complexion (29). If there is any doubt as to what wheat-colour complexion means, a look at the beautiful painting of Jesus existing in the Church of San Silvestro in Rome (30) will show that his complexion was (may I not say) of native Madras colour. He who runs may see it. The literary description should be understood in the light of the picture and the picture should be seen with the literary description. When Aramaic is the same as Tamil and when Jesus was a Tamil lady's son, is there not ethnic reason for Jesus (like Mary) being represented as of dark comlexion. Can sand be twisted into rope? Unless Palestine was an Indian colony, unless Jesus Christ was a Tamilian, would

it be possible for me to collect facts mentioned above, weave and interpret them in the way I have done? All the foregoing facts would have shown, I believe to the satisfaction of the reader that Jesus was a Tamilian. The next question is was Jesus a colonial born Indian or a home born Indian who went to the colony later on and got crucified there. India has ever been known as Punyabhumi. Which other land than the sacred soil on which we stand could have produced such a divinely noble soul as Jesus Christ, Kesava Krishna? Evidence is not lacking on this point too and I shall deal with this important question on some future occasion.

In a letter written to New India" of 27th Nov. 1923 some one took its Editor severely to task for referring to Christ as a coloured man. My reply to him is in the very next issue (28th Nov. 1923) of that newspaper under the heading of Black Statues to Jesus. Says he in that letter "Is it worth while by wilful though picturesque exaggeration to place a weapon in the hands of our enemies." The heart of Jesus bled for the sake of the whole world. But to this irate follower of that Great Preacher of the Gospel of Peace and Love coloured men are enemies. Are not coloured people God's children, God's children made in ebony? Now that Christ has been shown to be a Tamillan with a complexion like that of any of us here, would men

of the frame of mind of the writer of the letter mentioned above consider Jesus hereafter as friend or would they look upon him as a foe.

The pomegranate has many partitions,
But the seed is equally red in them all:
Do not give undue preference to a race of men,
For the blood is equally red in them all.

Sang a large-hearted poet who nurtured his thoughts not along the icy shores of the North but on the sun-burnt lands of the South. Would it be considered a wilfully picturesque exaggeration on my part to say that it is heat not cold that ripens a soul as it ripens a fruit. When what is called the colour question plays such an exaggerated part in the politics of modern times, it is a matter of pride and pleasure to me to say and for us to know that the Saviour of humanity was of our native Madras colour and that the Light of the World which illumines mankind to-day was lit of old on this sacred soil of our Sittars.

REFERENCES.

(1) Mrs. Jameson, Legends of the Madonna, pp. xxxiv, xxxv, l; A. Venturi, Madonna p. 7 (2) A. Venturi Madonna p. 8. (3) Mrs. Jenner Our Lady in Art. p. II: Roberts Greek the Language of Christ p. 171. (4) G. E. Meille Christ's Likeness in History and Art. p. 14. (5) A. Venturi Madonna p. 4. (6) G. E. Meille Christ's Likeness in History and

Art. p. 23. (7) Mrs. Jenner Our Lady in Art. p. 2: A. Venturi. Madonna p. I. (8) A. Venturi. Madonna p. 39 (9) A. Venturi. Madonna p. 43. (10) A. Venturi. Madonna p. 64. (11) Farrar. Life of Christ. p. 737. (12) A. Venturi. Madonna p. 160. (13) A. Venturi. Madonna p. 345. (14) Mrs. Jameson Legends of the Madonna. p. xlvi. (15) Mrs. Jameson Legends of the Madonna p. xlvi. (16) Cowper Apocryphal Gospels pp. lv. 30. (17) Miss. M. Innes Schools of Painting p. 10. (18) Farar Life of Christ p. 123. (19) G. E. Meille Christ's Likeness in History and Art. pp. 99. 101, 106. (20) Mrs. Jenner Christ in Art. p. 119. (21) Mrs. Jenner Christ in Art. p. 123. (22) Mrs. Jenner Christ in Art. p. 148. (23) M. Cruttwell Florentine Galleries p. 43. (24) A. Venturi Madonna p. 251. (25) E. L. Cutt's Early Christian Art. p. 324. (26) J. M. Robertson Jesus Problem p. 112. (27) G. E. Meille Christ's Likeness in History and Art. p. 24. (28) G. E. Meille Christ's Likeness in History and Art. p. 35. (29) Hill Medallic Portraits of Christ p. 10. (30) T. Heaphy Likeness of Christ p. 26.

III

WAS NOAH'S ARK BUILT IN INDIA?

NOAH'S தெப்பம்.

Genesis VI. 14 is as follows:—"Make thee an ark of Gopher wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark and shall pitch it within and without." Exodus II. 3 runs thus.—"And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with slime and pitch and she laid it on the flag by the river's brink." The first verse refers to God's command to Noah to make an ark before he sent the flood into the world. The second verse refers to the depositing of Moses in a chest by his mother. Though nothing is said of the shape of Noah's ark, yet its dimensions are given. Sir William Smith says: "It (Noah's ark) has to be 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth and 30 in height. Taking 21 inches to a cubit, the ark would be 525 feet in length, 87 feet 6] inches in breadth and 52 feet 6 inches in height. This is very considerably larger than the largest British man of war. It should be remembered that this huge structure was only intended to float and was not in the proper

sense of the word a ship. It had neither mast, sail nor rudder. It was in fact nothing but a floating house or oblong box rather." While Noah's ark of Genesis was an enormously huge structure constructed with wood, how was the ark of Exodus in which baby Moses was put in by his mother? It was a small one and made not of wood. Let me quote the words of a modern Biblical commentator on the subject. "Ark of bulrushes—a chest made of the stalks of papyrus reed which grew at the side of the Nile and in marshy places."

The original Hebrew word rendered ark is Tebah. Tebah occurs both in Genesis and in Exodus. Since the word occurs in both books, the English translators have rendered it ark in both places. Though the word has been translated so, yet since the ark of Genesis was an enormously huge structure and that of Exodus a tiny little one, it is a great puzzle to scholars, how one word could mean two such different things, as an enormously huge float and a small chest. This is one of the many unsolved problems of the Bible. Naturally, therefore, Sir William Smith observes, "The precise meaning of the Hebrew word (tebah) is uncertain. The word occurs only in Genesis VI-VIII and in Exod. II, 3. In all probability it is to old Egyptian that we are to look for its original form" and adds that "in Copt. vers. of Exod. II. 3. 5. Thebi is the

rendering of tebah." This extract from Sir William Smith makes certain points clear. (1) Though Tebah has been translated as ark in the English Bible, yet Western scholars do not know the precise meaning of the original word. (2) The Hebrew word occurring in Exodus (not in Genesis) has been translated in the Coptic version as Thebi. The reader should remember this fact as it is a very important one. (3) Finally in the opinion of scholars like Sir William Smith it is to the old Egyptian that we have to look for the original form and meaning of the word Tebah.

If Western scholars had not overlooked a statement of Aristotle in which he had derived the Jews from India, they would have known where to look for solving Biblical difficulties. Had they remembered his statement, they would have made out a formula Habiru (Hebrew) = Abira = Araba = Arava even as I had done. They would then have understood why the Tebah of Exodus alone was rendered as Thebi in the Coptic version and they would have inferred from that fact that the Tebah of Genesis must be different from the Tebah of Exodus. In other words, they would have known that the terms Tebah occurring in Genesis and in Exodus, though sounding alike, are really two different words and would not have translated them by one English word (ark) in both places. The reader

knows who the Hebrews were: the Abiras were tqe people to which Sri Krishna belonged; the Arabs are the people of Arabia and the Aravas are the Tamils of Southern India. Habiru (Hebrew) = Abira = Araba = Arava, I said. According to my formula the Hebrews, the Abiras and the Arabs are all Tamils. But how does my formula help us to solve the problem on hand? This way. It tells us where to look for a solution of Biblical difficulties—not to old Egypt but to present India. The moment we look to India the problem is easily solved. The huge structure of Noah, the ark, the Tebah of Genesis is the same as the Tamil Teppa (தெப்பம், float) and the small chest, ark, the Tebah of Exodus is the same as the Tamil Tabba, டப்பா, chest, box. A டப்பா put on water may float like a தெப்ப but all the same it is a டப்பா. That was precisely the case with the ark in which baby Moses was put and that is why Europeans have not been able to detect the difference between the two. I would now give the Tamil reader a test (provided of course by Westerners themselves) with which he may check the correctness of my discovery. The Aryan might have played his part in the history of the world. But owing to the wrong teachings of the West, the Aryan phantom holds spell bound the modern mind—Indian and European, to the exclusion of others. So nobody has cared to study the story

of the Dravidian civilisation and colonisation. This is not the place to deal with it. It is also unnecessary to discuss at present who the Copts of Egypt were. It will be sufficient if I say here that the name Copt of Egypt seems to be connected with Kapata of Kapatapuram or Kapu or Kavata (with an intrusive 'n'), Kavanda, the Gowndan of India. Because the Tebah of Exodus (and not of Genesis) was chest or box, the Coptic rendering of it is Thebi, Tebbi, Tabbi (டப்பி) which is still the word we use in our land for a chest or a box. The Tebah of Genesis is really a float—the very word that Sir William Smith uses in the extract given from him and the Tebah of Exodus is really a chest—the word that the modern Biblical commentator actually uses in the excerpt given from him. Though these scholars came very near the mark in their ideas and in their translations, yet since they did not know where to look for solving Biblical difficulties, they had naturally to imagine that the Tebah (தெப்பம்) of Genesis was the same as the Tebah (டப்பா) of Exodus and thus mistranslate two different terms by one English word--ark. The reader will now see that the Tebah of Genesis is different from that of Exodus and that it is the same as that which is on our lips a thousand times a day—Teppam. Teppakulam and Teppa Utsavam.

GOBRA CHETTU

"Make thee an ark of Gopher wood" said God to Noah. Gopher wood, what wood is that? That is another unsolved problem. Sir William Smith says that Noah's ark was "to be made of Gopher (i. e. Cypress) wood a kind of timber which both for its lightness and its durability was employed by the Phoenicians for building their vessels" Dummelow's one volume commentary (p. 15) is, however, more guarded in its identification. It says that Gopher "was probably the Cypress," The Oxford Helps to the Study of the Bible (p. 285) is still more careful for says that book: "Gopher, the Hebrew name of the wood used in building Noah's ark mentioned nowhere else in Scripture; cedar, pine, cypress have been conjectured for no valid reasons." The People's Bible Encyclopaedia (p. 114) edited by Rev. Barnes says however quite frankly that "it was an unknown wood used in the construction of the ark (Gen. VI. 14)." These quotations and especially the last one prove clearly that Gopher wood has not yet been identified. All have heard of the man who, saying that the Pancha Pandavas were like the legs of a cot three in number, pointed out two with his fingers, wrote down one and rubbed even that out. Western scholarship explains Gopher like that man in the story and and its explanation like his in the end comes to nought. What wood could it be? If

God spoke to Noah, he spoke in Tamil, for the Tebah of Genesis was found to be the Tamil word—தெப்பம். Would not Gopher also be a Tamil word? Let us try. Gopher, Goper. Koppara, Gobra Chettu coconut palm. Certainly a more plausible identification than cypress, cedar or pine.

WHERE WAS NOAH'S ARK BUILT?

Gopher has been shown by me to be the coconut palm. Alphonse de Candolle, the famous German Botanist, says in his interesting work "On the Origin of Cultivated Plants" that coconut palm existed originally in the Malay Archipelago and thence spread to Ceylon, India and other countries. His book makes it clear that that palm did not go to either Mesopotamia or Palestine. Whatever the original habitat of coconut might have been it has been in India for ever so many millenniums and for all practical purposes it is an Indian plant. While this plant has different names in the Malay Archipelago and in other countries: in Ceylon and in India it has got the name of Koppara and Gobra chettu. The fact that the name Gopher occurs only once in a solitary verse of the most ancient of Biblical books coupled together with the fact that even its meaning has been forgotten in Western Asia, shows beyond the shadow of a doubt that the book of Genesis or at least the verse in which the name

Gopher is found must have been written, neither in Palestine nor in Mesopotamia, but in a land where a tree was called Gopher. The only land in which that name still persists and prevails is, as I have said, Southern India. The Biblical name Gopher, therefore, lands us in Southern India. Added to this is another fact.

Archaeological explorations made in Mesopotamia in the 19th century revealed the existence of a Babylonian Flood Legend. For a number of reasons which need not be detailed here, savants have come to the conclusion that the Biblical story of the flood is only a rehash or a variant of the Babylonian version. Was Noah's ark therefore built in Babylonia? The extreme section of Western opinion is inclined to think that way. However, let us see. Archaeological discoveries made so far in Mesopotamia point out that the Babylonian civilisation must have had its origin somewhere still further to the east of the land of the two rivers. Sir Flinders Petrie would look to ancient Elam to the east of Mesopotamia and stop with it. But archaeological discoveries continue and each day reveals something new. Indian readers would remember Sir John Marshall's references to discoveries made in Sind quite recently showing connections between Babylonian and Indian civilisations. Though Mesopotamian discoveries point to further east for the origin

of the Babylonian culture and though the recent discoveries in Sind show the way for tracing its origin in India, yet owing to a strange incurable myopia European savants would stop even at the very threshold of our country and fondly imagine that the Sind discoveries only prove the coming in of the Sumerian into India and not the going out of the Sabara, Samara (Sumerian) out of India into Mesopotamia. The way to power may be from North to South in modern days, but the path to dominance in ancient times seems to have been the other way—from South to North. Sind was one of the ways by which the Dravidians of India went out to Western A sia and that is why Dravidian element (referred to by a writer in the Indian Antiquary for 1878, Vol. VII pp. 293-295) is to be found in Sindhi. Even before the Sind discoveries, so far back as the early part of 1924, equating Babylon, Bobbili and the town of sacred Papuli (Tiruppapulioor) in Southern India, I derived the Mesopotamian from the South Indian town of that name. May be, but how is this relevant to the problem on hand? If the Biblical legend be a rehash of the Babylonian one, would not my discovery regarding Babylon indicate that the Babylonian legend too must have had its origin in India? How?

Now in the Babylonian Flood Legend the place where the ark of that legend was built

is called Suripak. If the legend could be believed, that town was on the banks of the Euphrates. Suripak might have been the ancient name of an ancient town in ancient Mesopotamia, but why has it been blotted out of memory? Ancient names persist only in original homes and not in colonies. That is why while Suripak and Babylon are old tales of a lost Mesopotamia, Suri kolam (tank in Vellore), Kilpauk, Kaveripak, Acharapak and Bobbilli and Tiruppapulioor are realities still in Southern India. If the plant name Gopher of the Biblical Flood Legend landed us in Southern India, the town name Suripak of the still more old Babylonian Flood Legend lands us again in the same land. Where was Noah's ark built—or at all events where did the story originate? Was it in Palestine which knows not what Gopher means? Was it in Mesopotamia where town names end not with pak or was it in a land where, despite the revolutions, not of centuries but of milleniums, the coconut palm is still called Gopher, where Teppams still float in Teppakulams during Teppa Utsavams and where town names still end in pak? The Biblical story hence is only an instance of the migration of a legend. For when the Hebrews migrated from India, they carried with them this ancient story of theirs into Palestine.

POSTSCRIPT

Tebah and Gopher are not the only Tamil words occurring in the Bible in connection with the construction of Noah's ark. There are more. As the article is already long I did not think it necessary to discuss them.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"WAS NOAH'S ARK BUILT IN INDIA?"

Sir,—With reference to my article "Was Noah's Ark built in India?" published in "The Hindu" of 15th July 1926, Dewan Bahadur M. Venkatarama Aiyar, retired Assistant Commissioner ef Excise, tells me that he had heard from the late Mr. C. M. Sherman of the Salt, Abkari and Customs Department, of a tradition prevailing in North Malabar that Noah's Ark after the flood rested on the Eripuram Hills near Madai village in Chirakkal Taluk, North Malabar district. Mr. Sherman it appears, learnt the information from Mr. G. W. Dance, a former Collector of the district. In the light of my discovery about the South Indian origin of the Jews, the prevalence in Malabar of the tradition mention-

ed by the Dewan Bahadur becomes significant. Some Malayali gentleman will be able to throw further light in the matter.

M. S. RAMASWAMI AIYAR,
Deputy Superintendent of Police
Tirusalem, Royapet, Madras.

IV

Biblical reference to Sangham.

WHO WERE THE KALABRAS OF S. INDIAN TRADITION?

"In the years fled,
Lips that are dead
Sang me that song."

S. Indian tradition places the first Tamil Sangham at a remote age. But somehow European orientalists (and following them Indian scholars too) are inclined to bring down all the Tamil Sanghams to a late period of Indian history contrary to Tamil traditions. The result is that ancient dynasties are mixed up with later ones bearing the same name and a good deal of confusion prevails regarding S. Indian chronology. Advance in one direction means often advance in some other unthought-of-side. The evidence that I adduce in this paper is from the Bible on which I have been writing for some years past. The object of this brief note of mine, is merely to show that Sangham as an institution (irrespective of the question of its functions) must have been a very ancient one and that the term Sangham (as the

name of an institution) must have been in current use in S. India from the grey dawn of antiquity.

Now according to the New Testament Jesus on the fateful night of his arrest is said to have been taken to the Jewish Sanhedrim before he was taken to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Palestine. Sanhedrim was a Jewish council. This council was called Sanhedrin and Sanhedrim (Cf. Tamil Nondi-Mondi, lame man). A reference to books on Biblical literature would inform the reader of its functions. Since according to my discoveries, Palestine was a S. Indian colony and Hebrew and Aramaic were ancient Tamil, the Jewish council before which Jesus was hauled up must have been an S. Indian one and its name a Tamil word. In this connection I may state that all the information that we have now of ancient Palestine is either through corrupt Western sources or through a people (Jews) who had been denationalised much owing to Europeanisation. Now the last two letters 'im' of the word Sanhedrim are a plural sign. If these two letters are dropped out the remaining word is Sanhedr. H and G (or K) are interchangeable letters—Eg. Simham (சிம்ஹம்) Singam (சிங்கம்). When G (or K) is substituted for H in Sanhedr the word becomes Sangedr. Since Hebrew and Aramaic were Tamil, Sangedr is the Tamil Sangatthar (சங்கத்தார்). Sanhedrim means Sangathargal (சங்கத்தார்கள்). If the two final

letters 'im' are taken as part of the word, Sanhedrim may also be interpreted as Sangatharam ie Sangath—aram or Sangathar—aham, council—chamber. (Cf. the English expression court-house). By whichever way the term is interpreted, Sanhedrim has reference to Sangham. But for reasons which need not be stated here, I prefer the former explanation I have given.

When people emigrate from one land to another, they usually take with them the language, institutions, customs, traditions etc of the mother country to the colony. The institution of Sanhedrim must have been carried by the Jews from India into Palestine when they emigrated from the former to the latter. The New Testament shows Sanhedrim as a well established institution in Palestine in the beginning of the 1st century A. D. And in the Mishna (Sanh. 1. 6.) this institution is traced up to the 70 elders appointed by Moses (Num. XI. 16. 17). Since Jewish Rabbis trace the origin of Sanhedrim to the time of Moses, Sangham (as an institution whatever its functions might have been) must have existed in S. India from hoary times. And this conclusion arrived at from the evidence of the Bible harmonises well with Tamil traditions.

How early could the Tamil Sangham be pushed back? That is the next question. Who was Pandion of Greece? Shakespeare sang of him. Even

poets have not remembered his name afterwards. Who were the Galabri of Greece? Cartographers of the ancient geography of the world alone have remembered them and have marked their name in their maps. And between the sheets of ancient atlases they slumber now forgotten. Since scholars are searching in India for the Kalabras that warred with the Pandyans of old, they are unable to answer the question-how far early could the Tamil Sangham be pushed back? The world has forgotten that ancient Indian monarchs went far afield in their conquests, that Indian Rishis went even as far the forests of Europe for their Tapas and that the Indian people emigrated far and wide. I am not making these statements rashly with out evidence in my possession. When European scholars realise that Pandion I and II, kings of Athens and the Pandionidae were the Pandyans of S. India or at least their offshoots and that the name Sciron of the son-in-law of Pandion II of Greece was the same as the S. Indian Seran (சேரன்) and when Indian scholars realise that the Kalabras of S. Indian traditions were the Galabri of Greece, they will be in a position to answer the question satisfactorily.

Who was Solon the great legislator of Greece: how much did Tamil influence ancient Greek language: what debt Europe owes to S. India? Fascinating questions are these. "WHEN HINDU

RAJHAS RULED IN GREECE" is an intersting title for a book but it awaits a historian's pen. It was not out of ignorance (as Biblical scholars think) that one of the Herods claimed the Spartans as belonging to the same race as the Jews. It was not by chance that Spartans bore the name of Lacedaemonians: that the islands near India to the west of it bear the name of Laccadiv islands and that the Parathavars occupy the sea-board of Tuticorin at the gate of Lakka (Lanka). It was not by accident that Athaena was the tutilary goddess of Athens and that Meenakshi is still the tutilary goddess of Madura. About 60 degrees of longitude divide Greece from S. India. In between Greece and S. India Herodotus placed the Termilae (Dramila, Tamils) in ancient Lukka (Lycia) by the side of the Carians (Karayans, கரையான், fishermen) in Southern Asia-Minor, north of Palestine and Syria, as though to point them out with his finger as the petrified foot-prints of the westward march of a forgotten people (Eastern Ethiopians). Here is an entrancing field for research. Past is as blue as far hills and present is as green as near ones but the kaleidoscopic picture of the story of India some how mingles the blue of far hills and the green of near ones.

NOTES.

(1) Lanka is nothing more than the word Lakka

with an intrusive euphonic 'n.' Emigrants from Ceylon to Asia Minor were called in ancient W. Asian inscriptions as Lucca or Lukka and as Lycians in latter Greek geography. Regarding intrusion of euphonic 'n' compare the following forms—Kokka-Konkan: Kuttalam—Kuntala: Kadesh—Kandesh: Gadara—Gandara etc.

2) Ravana the mighty king of Ceylon (Lakka) was a Paulastya i. e. a descendent of Pulastya. The Pulastyas of Indian tradition were the same as the Pulasati of W. Asian inscriptions and the Philistines of the Bible.

V

Garlanding of Apostle John.

Sir,

With reference to "Garlanding in Churches" that appeared in the letters to the Editor column in the Hindu of the 5th instant, let me bring to the notice of the public Biblical reference to garlanding in the 13th verse of the 14th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Commentators are not sure whether the garlands mentioned therein were meant for adorning the Apostles or the oxen that were brought on that occasion. Vide Article Garland in Rev. Barne's People's Bible Encyclopaedia. Since Apostles Paul and Barnabas were colonial Indians (Pala and Puranappa) according to my discovery, the garlands were intended for putting on their necks for showing respect to them, as is even now the case in India. The oxen brought on that occasion were, I should think, not for killing but for the purpose of making Godanam in honour of the visit of the Apostles.

M. S. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

VI

PALESTINE A TAMIL COLONY

WERE THE PHARISEES BRAHMANS?

In my recent letter to the Madras Press communicating the comments of the Paris edition of "The Chicago Tribune" on my researches about the Tamil nationality of Jesus Christ, I said that a perusal of even a school book like John Fennimore's "The Holy Land" in the "Peeps at Many Lands Series," published by A. and C. Black, London, would be sufficient to convince the Indian reader that he is reading in that book about South Indian habits and customs. That book deals with the present day life in Palestine.

COMMON CUSTOMS AND MANNERS

The following points which I have collected from that book will show that the roll of three or four thousand years has not been able to obliterate Indian influence from there. (P. 6) Compare similarity of Palestinian and Indian peasants' home. The mud ceilings with the growth of grass on them are like those in Ceded Districts. (P. 8-9) Compare the habit of spreading mats for receiving visitors and the rolling of the bed each morning after sleep and putting it away. (P. 9) What is the grain bin with the small hole at the bottom referred to in this page?

It is what we call in Tamil Kulukkai or Kulumai. (P. 11) Compare the practice of Palestine and Indian women collecting brushwood for fuel. (P. 12) Note the habit of women folk carrying water pots on the head. See coloured plate opposite page 14 and note the style of carrying water jars on hand like people returning from rivers with chombu on hand in Madura side. (P. 13). See the flour mill-stone. It is what we call Tirugu or Endram. See coloured plate opposite page 16 and note the way the women sit and work it. Dreadfully Indian. (P. 15) Who is the fellah referred to at the end of chapter III in that page? Is he not the same as the Palla of India? (P. 17) Mark the custom of preparing cowdung cakes for fuel. The author calls it a very ancient custom. Compare the habit of carrying clothes to wash to streams or pools and the use of clay which is still in use in South Indian villages. (P. 18) Compare the Palestinian peasants spoiling the water supply by washing like the Indian peasants. (P. 19) Compare the general non-use of butter by the Palestinian peasants and their preparing it into ghee. Compare the putting of cooking pots over stones for an oven. Compare also the washing of hands before eating, the squatting on heels (called kuthaviikirathu in Tamil), the use of the right hand alone for eating and the final washing of the hands and the smoking by women as in Telugu parts. A perusal of this

passage will further show the reader that the custom of uttering pious forms of grace (like Govinda, Govinda, etc.) before eating done by Brahmans now, must have been a universal custom among all ranks of people in India before, since the Palestinian peasant too utters words of grace before eating.

HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS AND CRAFTS MEMBERSHIP.

(P. 23) Read description of the Palestinian plough. See coloured plate, opposite page 25 and note its (similarity to the Indian plough.) (P. 25) Compare the Palestinian village procession for praying for rain. This goes on still in Indian villages with கொடும்பாவி. (P. 27) Compare Palestinian habit of hanging babies in bags from branches of trees. Our labouring women still do so. The bag is called in Tamil Thooli. (P. 28) Read the passage describing harvesting operations, grain separating, winnowing, etc. and see how much Indian they are. (P. 30) Note the Indian like descriptions of terrace-fields of hill side villages. (P. 35) Compare the way of beating olives by means of long sticks. That is what we do still for getting down mangoes, tamarind fruits, etc. (P. 37) Read description of the Palestinian sheepfold with the author's surprise "but cannot find food." The fold is called in Tamil Patti. (P. 43) Note the habit of penning different flocks in the same fold and separating them for grazing in the morning. (P. 46) A city street is the universal

dust heap for its inhabitants, says the author. Is it not so in our towns and village still? Even the dogs of Palestine seem to have descended from ancient canine emigrants of India. A perusal of the passage about dogs would delight the reader owing to its Indianity, if I may coin such a word. (P. 49) Note the way the shop-keeper squats in his shop, his serenity and the manner the shops are gathered together. (P. 53) Read about brass workers' shop. Even in the poorest house there will be some small vessels of brass kept for great occasions, says the author. Does the reader need further proof to show that the Palestinian peasant was an Indian emigrant? (P. 54) Compare fortress like houses of Palestine and our own houses of the old type of well-to-do people of towns and villages with small windows or with no windows at all.

ARE THE HEBREWS AND ARAB-TAMILS?

(P. 57) Habiru is an ancient form (of the name Hebrew) occurring in contemporary inscriptions of W. Asia. With the information (regarding the origin of the Hebrews in India) furnished by Aristotle, I worked out a formula Habiru-Abira- Araba-Arava. The Hebrews of W. Asia, the ancient Abiras of India to whom Sri Krishna belonged, the Arabs of Arabia are all therefore Aravas or Tamils. Note the Arab custom of not harming a man whose salt had been eaten. In India too there is the cus-

tom of not playing false to him whose milk had been drunk. Compare the story of the Brahman woman outwitting a thief by giving him milk. (P. 60) Note the joy on the birth of a boy and the gloom on that of a girl. Compare the carrying of an infant on the back of the mother with the way in which Korava and other wandering women carry their infants in India. Note also the Palestinian way of carrying grown up children on shoulders as in India. (P. 61) Note the ideas about the evil-eye. We call it kan-drishti. (P. 64) Note the hurling of stones with slings. We call it kavvangal. (P. 80) Has the name of the sacred water-fall Banias of Palestine any connection with Banathirtham of Tinnevelly district? I wont' be surprised at it. For Josephus tells that a sage that lived in the 1st century A. D. in Pales-tine was called Banos and that he wore bark of trees for clothing. Is not Banos, Bana and the bark of trees, the Sanskrit Valkala and the Tamil Marauri? (P. 81) Compare the custom of bathing in the sacred Jordon and our own baths in sacred rivers. Note also the cutting of staves. I have noticed similar things when people return from Palani or other sacred bathing places. (P. 82) Note the performance of Pradakshanam round the walls of Jerusalem, the wetting of clothes in the sacred waters of Jordon. Note also the carrying of the clothes of absent people for wetting them in sacred waters.

Each instance by itself may not be much but who can deny the cumulative effect of all these? The book is priced only two shillings and six pence. To realise the truth of my statements the reader should secure a copy and go through it. John Fennimore's work is after all only a small school book that treats of the present day life of Palestine after the subsidence of three or four thousand years on it. The wonder to me is that so much of the past is still visible. Apart from this John Fennimore does not exhaust the subject If the Hebrews were emigrants from India, would they not have carried to the colony our good and bad things? A perusal of other books relating to the subject and a careful scanning of them will show the reader that heaps and heaps of Indian things, habits and customs existed in palestine (Pallisthanam) before the terrible butchery of our ancient compatriots by Vespasian and Titus and the razing of the temple to the ground and the forbidding of them on pain of death to put their feet on the sacred soil of Jerusalem (Tiru-Salem) by Hadrian. Joining of hands to complete a promise, goad called Tarkuchi in Tamil, temple prakarams both open and covered, Belly God, shaving of head on completion of vow, prohibition against eating in the houses of foreigners and low

caste people, bathing after coming in contact with untouchables, purification, prokshanam, tarpanam, upanayanam, sraddham, marriage pandals, etc are some more examples. To quote more would be to swell the list which is not necessary now.

I shall however add a few more as they are surprising and telling examples. The similarity of the customs of the Pharisees and the Brahmans has long been noticed by Western scholars. I discovered only recently that the Pharisees were actually those whom we call in India to-day Brahmans. Was there anti-Brahman feeling then too? O yes and Jesus led it. But it should be said to the credit of that community that it was not orthodox Peter, nor even the Lord's brother that was responsible for the abolition of caste and untouchability in the nascent Christian community—the credit of it goes to a Brahman who rose far above narrow prejudices of caste and creed and race and to whom Christian Europe owes much of its spiritual teaching—St. Paul of Tarsus. Why did this man change his name to Paul the moment he became a follower of Christ? Theological Europe blinks, and guesses and blinks. No, it is not the Roman name Paul, meaning little one. It has no sense. No, St. Paul would not have taken the name from a nation that crucified his Master and that too when the Master's blood was

as yet wet. Paul was a great persecutor of the followers of Christ before he saw the vision on the way to Damascus. Even after conversion he was suspected for some time as a Police spy. He must disabuse the suspicion from the minds of his new confreres. Henceforth he was no persecutor, he was their Pala, protector. That is the rationale of the change; that is the word and that is its true meaning. A Carpenter is called in India an Asari. If Jesus Christ was, as the Bible says, a Carpenter's son (and a Carpenter) and if he was, as I have been saying a Tamilian, would not the name Asari be found somewhere in some ancient record at least, in speaking either of him or of his ancestor? Logic will say, yes. But does it occur anywhere? Well, an Apocryphal Gospel (Pseudo Matthew) calls his mother's grandfather "Achar," a name that is a puzzle to European commentators. Which South Indian will not recognise in the name the Indian term Asari. Nay, more. The Carpenter caste of India wears the sacred thread. If Jesus Christ was as the Bible says a Carpenter's son (and a Carpenter) and if he was as I have been saying a Tamilian, would he not also wear the sacred thread? Logic will again say, yes. But did he wear it? If upanayanams were performed in Palestine as I said before, why is not the sacred thread found in the pictures of Jesus? A legitimate question. Ecce Homo. How can the inimitable

man have any more rebirth after his willing crucifixion on the cross for the love of humanity? Karma will cling to him no more. Coming events cast their shadows before. Jesus should have discarded the sacred thread after he became a Sanyasin, for the world was his sojourn, God was his care and humanity his love. His subsequent discarding of it might have been the reason for his not being generally invested, in pictures with that emblem of spiritual rebirth on this side of death. But the sacred thread was not entirely forgotten. While various schools of painting loved to depict Jesus in this or that fashion, a particular school alone, of which Perugino was the ablest representative, did not forget that earthly sign of rebirth. Was it chance or was it devout and tenacious conservatism (as Adolpho Venturi thinks) that caused the Umbrian school to hold somewhat aloof from the renewals to which Tuscany gave herself with so much grace and alacrity. No, it was something deeper. It was because the Umbrian painters carried the old traditions of Sienna "by regarding painting as chiefly a vehicle for conveying religious truths" that the sacred thread has lingered in a picture of that school of painting. And in the Uffizi gallery in Florence hangs a picture of the "Good Shepherd" painted by some unknown painter of the Perugino school in which an Indian can clearly recognise the sacred thread on the body of

Jesus. That picture is reproduced opposite page 259 in Adolpho Venturi's Madonna. And the name Jesus Christ itself is a Western corruption of what Indian terms? Kesava Krishna.

CONCLUSION.

This is not the time and the place to discuss these questions, however interesting they may be. Like the idle singer of an empty day I am but humming these old forgotten tales so that Indian scholars abler than myself, hearing them, might perchance turn to labour in a field that lies fallow and uncared. Will they do so? The future of India will be greater than the glory of the past.

(P. S.) Araba-Arava I have said in the article. It is no fancy. Evidence (historical, philological, inferential, etc.,) available to prove that Arabia was a Tamil colony, that Arabic was ancient Tamil as spoken in Arabia, that Prophet Mahomed was a colonial born Hindu, that he had a Tamil baby-name at first and that the religion spread by him was a colonial Hindu's reforming sect, is equally great, interesting and instructive and I hope to deal with it some day when I have leisure.